

Forest Utilization & Marketing



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Timber cruising update

Work to update and modernize the DNR Forest Resources Division timber cruising software, hardware, and field methods continues at a strong pace. Highlights include:

Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc. was awarded a contract to provide their Mobile Map software
masonbruce.com/technology/mobilemap-cruise/

Field hardware options (tablets and smartphones) are in field testing.

Training for DNR staff will begin in fall 2019 and continue into spring 2020.

Contract marking firms, interested foresters and timber purchasers will be invited to specific training sessions.

Full implementation of the new cruising methods, hardware and software begin in Spring 2020.

All Fiscal Year 2021 timber sale proposals and some 2020 proposals will be done with the new system. Questions: Contact Brenda Haskell, HaskellB@michigan.gov or Jason Stephens, StephensJ@michigan.gov.

DNR Utilization and Marketing Program Update

In the first half of 2019, the DNR Utilization and Marketing program provided outreach, education and technical assistance to loggers, mills and manufacturers in partnership with the Lake States Lumber Association.

Workshops and projects included:

- Log grading and scaling for loggers and sawmills
- Hardwood lumber grading course with Lake States Lumber Alliance
- Sawing, edging and trimming workshop for sawmills with LSLA
- Workshops in Kalamazoo and Dearborn for architects and engineers on mass timber construction with WoodWorks
- Six wood energy feasibility assessment site visits in the southern Lower Peninsula with the USDA Forest Service
- Financial support for the Michigan Forest Biomaterials Institute's second Forest Bioeconomy Conference in Midland
- Development of a new Michigan Forest Products Industry Directory
- Administration of an economic analysis project examining forest products industry contributions to 20 northeastern states' economies

Looking ahead, the DNR is hosting workshops on business marketing and management for sawmills, log grading and scaling, railroad tie production, and additional workshops on mass timber construction for architects and engineers. We welcome suggestions for training topics; please forward ideas to program staff.

2018 Primary Mill Survey In-Progress

This spring and summer, the DNR is conducting a survey of mills and manufacturers active during 2018. It is in partnership with the USDA Forest Service's new annual Timber Product Output Report survey. The survey gathers information on the volume of wood use and residues produced by Michigan's sawmills, paper mills, wood energy plants and other manufacturers that use sawlogs, pulpwood, and chips. All individual mill volume information is kept confidential and will be used to produce a statewide report on the status of Michigan's primary manufacturing industry. The last mill survey indicated that Michigan had 282 active primary mills and manufacturers in 2016; they received and processed about 4.5 million standard cords of wood. The 2016 report is posted on the DNR's webpage at Michigan.gov/ForestProducts. The 2018 DNR mill survey report should be available by August 2019; the USDA Forest Service's Timber Product Output Report should be available by February 2020.

2019 Tree Planting by the Numbers

Conifer tree seedlings were planted in high numbers on state forest land in 2019 despite a cold spring. Many northern areas experienced delayed frost well into the normal planting window. A grand total of 6.3 million seedlings were planted during an unusually short time frame. About 1.7 million jack pine were planted at approximately 1,450 trees per acre to continue to support Kirtland's warbler habitat in the northern Lower Peninsula. Another 2.2 million jack pine, 2.4 million red pine, 6,000 white pine, and 1,500 white spruce were planted across state forest land at approximately 900 trees per acre. Most of the jack pine not planted for warbler habitat was planted in the Upper Peninsula. Most of the red pine was planted in the northern Lower Peninsula. Approximately 7,000 acres were planted.

Business Marketing and Management for Sawmills Workshop

The DNR and the Michigan Wood Innovation Team are pleased to host a one-day workshop in Gaylord on Aug. 15 focusing on business management and marketing forest products – a workshop tailored for sawmills. Marketing has been called the backbone of successful forest products companies, yet many manufacturers struggle with the marketing concept. Those attending this workshop will learn about the products of wood-based industries, marketing as it relates to these products and how to use marketing strategies to stay competitive. It's designed for new marketing and sales staff, owners and managers, or those wishing to brush-up on the industry. The workshop will touch on marketing strategy for your products, market research, current industry trends, and international marketing. The workshop will be taught by Dr. Bob Smith, professor of forest products marketing and director of the Center for Forest Products Business at Virginia Tech; and Dr. Omar Espinoza, assistant professor and chair of the Forest Products Management Development Institute at the University of Minnesota.

Industry events:

EGLE (formerly DEQ) Stream Crossing Permit Training, two dates/locations: 8:30 a.m. EST July 31, Skandia Township Hall, 224 Kreiger Drive, Skandia; and 8:30 a.m. CST Aug. 2 at the Watersmeet Township Community Center, N4689 First St., Watersmeet. Registration is required: Kristi Wilson 906-236-0380, WilsonK17@michigan.gov

Architectural Woodwork Institute Great Lakes Chapter Annual Member Meeting, Aug. 8-9, Holland, Mich. awigreatlakes.org/events

Business Marketing & Management for Sawmills workshop, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 15, University Center, Gaylord. Cost: \$50. Contact Dave at 517-284-5887 for more information or register at eventbrite.com/e/business-marketing-management-for-sawmills-tickets-61513245774

Kiln Drying Short Course, Aug. 12-15, Northcentral Technical College, Antigo, Wis. \$450 for Great Lakes Kiln Drying Association members, \$500 for non-members. Register at <http://bit.ly/NTCKiln2019> Call 715-803-1034 for more information.

North American Wholesale Lumber Association Midwest Regional Meeting, Aug. 15, Minneapolis. nawla.org/page/minneapolis-regional-meeting

Log Scaling and Grading Workshop, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Aug. 21, Sterling, Mich. (West Branch area). Contact Brenda at 989-732-3541 x5043 for more information. haskillb@michigan.gov

Railroad Tie Workshop, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. CST Aug. 28, Nadeau Township Hall & Performance Lumber Corporation Carney, Mich. Cost \$20. Register at: eventbrite.com/e/railroad-tie-workshop-tickets-61590111682. Contact Dave at 517-284-5887 for more information.

2019 Logging & Heavy Equipment Expo, September 5-7, Escanaba. Learn more at gltpa.org/gltpa/Expo.asp

Architectural Woodwork Institute Project Management Seminar, AWI Great Lakes Chapter, Sept. 5-6, Grand Rapids. awigreatlakes.org/events

National Hardwood Lumber Association 2019 Convention and Expo, October 2-4, New Orleans. <http://www.nhla.com/convention>

2019 Paul Bunyan Show, Oct. 4-6, Lore City, Ohio. ohioforest.org/page/PBSShowFacts

Heating the Midwest Bioenergy Day Event, Oct. 23, Shakopee, Minn. heatingthemidwest.org

2020 Winter Meeting, Lake States Lumber Association, January 15-17, Green Bay, Wis. lsla.com

DNR Forest Marketing and Utilization

Contacts:

Brenda Haskill, haskillb@michigan.gov, or David Neumann, neumannnd@michigan.gov.

The instructors are also authors of “Business Management Practices for Small to Medium Sized Forest Products Firms,” a manual that provides information for starting a small forest products company, from business planning to financial management pubs.ext.vt.edu/ANR/ANR-160/ANR-160.html. Cost of the workshop is \$50. Register at eventbrite.com/e/business-marketing-management-for-sawmills-tickets-61513245774. For more information, contact Dave Neumann at NeumannD@Michigan.gov or 517-284-5887.

Good Neighbor Authority Update

In Fiscal Year 2019, the DNR is preparing about 7,500 acres of timber sales under the Good Neighbor Authority. That breaks down to about 2,700 acres in the Ottawa National Forest, 1,400 acres in the Hiawatha National Forest, and 3,400 acres in the Huron-Manistee National Forests. The DNR is currently working with each national forest to identify timber and non-timber projects for FY 2020, and preliminary numbers indicate approximately 11,000 acres will be prepared for sale in the three Michigan National Forests. Besides timber sale preparation, work will include land line surveys and botany survey work for future timber sales. (Note: the Michigan DNR will be preparing timber sales on approximately 55,000 acres of state forest land in fiscal year 2019)

DNR assistance for sawmill efficiency and wood energy feasibility evaluations

Assistance is available from the DNR, the Michigan Wood Innovation Team, and the USDA Forest Service to help Michigan sawmills and wood manufacturers improve efficiency and evaluate potential savings by converting to wood heating or energy systems. The DNR can provide a free sawmill efficiency evaluation to assess machine center accuracy and lumber recovery from mill-specific log grades, identify where yield losses are occurring, estimate profitability of processing different log grades, and evaluate other issues that affect mill efficiency and profitability. These studies can also help mills to reduce waste. Evaluations are confidential.

Wood-fired heat systems can be a good fit for some companies, and the DNR and USDA Forest Service can help you evaluate your options. Wood-chip and wood-manufacturing residue-fired heat systems can be competitive with natural gas-fired systems. In some cases, electrical power generation may also be cost-effective. For more information on either free service, contact Dave Neumann at neumannnd@michigan.gov or 517-284-5887.

Grants available:

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Value-Added/Regional Food Systems Grants: Grants to establish, retain, expand, attract or develop value-added agricultural processing in Michigan (including some forest products), or to expand or develop regional food systems or access the healthy food. Applications are typically due in spring. See Michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684_78393---,00.html.

MDARD Rural Development Fund Grants: Grant opportunities to promote the sustainability of land-based industries and support infrastructure that benefits rural communities. Proposals are usually due in fall. Michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684_78392---,00.html.

Landscape Scale Restoration Grants, USDA Forest Service. Application deadline TBD, usually early to mid-September. For more information: fs.usda.gov/naspf/working-with-us/grants/landscape-scale-restoration-grants.

Wood Innovations Grants, USDA Forest Service. Application deadline usually in early January. For more information: fs.fed.us/science-technology/energy-forest-products/wood-innovations-grants.

USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP): Competitive grants can cover up to 25 percent of project costs and projects can begin after an application has been submitted. Applications are typically due in spring or fall for projects of any size. rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency.

USDA REAP: Guaranteed Loans for renewable energy and energy efficiency systems provides up to 75% of project costs and is noncompetitive. Loans have a continuous application cycle. For more information: rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency.

Department of Energy: No-cost technical assistance for federally-recognized Indian tribes to advance tribal energy projects. For more information see energy.gov/indianenergy/technical-assistance

Updates to the Midwest Biomass Exchange

Finding markets for sawmill and manufacturer residue can be difficult, and recent updates to the Midwest Biomass Exchange are intended to help make that easier. The Exchange is a free internet marketplace for marketing biomass feedstocks. Recent updates improved new-user access to the site, added biomass categories for describing the listed fuel stocks, and an enhanced description of the buyer/seller's location. Hosted by the non-profit Heating the Midwest, the site aims to help connect buyers and sellers of woody- and agricultural biomass that can be used as fuel for heat and energy systems or as feedstock for manufacturing higher value products. Users can place "For Sale" and "Wanted" ads for biomass and connect through the site's email utility. The site also includes a map utility showing the rough location of buyer and sellers. The site and recent revisions have been supported by the USDA Forest Service's Forest Products Marketing Unit, with technical support from the Michigan DNR. For more information, contact Dave Neumann at neumann@dnr.michigan.gov or see www.mbioex.com.

Mass timber building under construction at MSU

A version of this story was previously published in MSU Today

Michigan State University's future STEM Teaching and Learning Facility will be the first in Michigan to use wood, rather than concrete and steel, for its structure.

The mass timber framing style uses large solid or engineered wood. The \$100 million facility is being constructed of glue-laminated wooden columns and a relatively new product called cross-laminated timber (CLT) for the floors and ceilings. The new building is going into place around the former Shaw Lane Power Plant, adjacent to Spartan Stadium. The renovation will include a student science studio space and a commons area with cafe. Two new mass timber wings will offer 117,000 square feet of teaching labs.



CLT has been used in Europe for more than 20 years, with recent skyrocketing interest in Canada and the U.S., especially on the West Coast. Currently, there is no CLT manufacturing in Michigan, although it's a prime place for future development.

"Growing trees sustainably, using all of the harvested wood and incorporating it into a long-term structure extends the carbon and climate benefits of forests," said Rich Kobe, forest ecologist and chair of MSU's Department of Forestry. "Those re-growing forests take up more carbon and provide important wildlife habitat and clean water."

Many believe the MSU building will catalyze additional mass timber construction in the state, which might lead to establishing CLT manufacturing in Michigan.

"Having a CLT manufacturer in Michigan would not only create green jobs using sustainable resources, but also provide the financial resources and incentives that are needed to restore and conserve healthy, diverse, and productive forests that provide so many other benefits," said Debbie Begalle, state forester and chief of the forest resources division of the Michigan DNR.

Exploring Northern Hardwoods – Bill Cook, MSU, UP Extension Forester

Northern hardwoods are forests dominated by tree species such as sugar maple, red maple, basswood, hemlock, and yellow birch. This forest type is the most common in Michigan and arguably the most valuable in many ways. A major study has been undertaken to better understand management systems for these forests.

Northern Hardwoods cover more than five million acres. That's larger than all the state forests and about a quarter of all the forestland in Michigan. These are the forests sought by the leaf-peepers in the fall. Foresters have, collectively, spent hundreds of years thinning and improving the quality of these forests. High-quality sugar maple trees command high prices. Nearly a quarter of all Michigan wildlife use these forests for at least a portion of their habitat requirements or preferences.

Northern hardwoods are important to Michigan as well as Wisconsin. However, they're not regenerating well, and not with the desired level of tree diversity. That's why the Michigan DNR approached Gary Roloff and Mike Walters to help design a huge study of these forests across Michigan. Gary and Mike are researchers at Michigan State University. The idea is to learn how to increase sustainability and diversity. The traditional single-tree selection management technique has not rendered the diversity of tree species and age classes that were the goals. Across much of Michigan and the Lake States, decades of deer over-browsing have curtailed desired recruitment of new forests. There may be other reasons, too.

Additionally, exotic pests, such as beech bark disease and the emerald ash borer, have removed tree species components. Researchers also are closely watching the known populations of the Asian long-horned beetle. (One population is in Ohio.)

To develop a new model for northern hardwood management, the partners have fired up one of the largest studies of its kind in history. There are 142, 30-acre research plots across the northern Lower Peninsula to the far Western Upper Peninsula; they are located on both public and corporate ownerships.

Three alternative regeneration techniques are deployed: seed trees, shelterwood, and gap selection. The seed tree method is a clear-cut except for six to eight selected trees per acre that serve as a seed source for the next forest. A shelterwood harvest will remove up to 50 percent of the canopy to allow prescribed amounts of light to encourage desired tree species. Gap silviculture creates small gaps in the forest canopy, larger than single tree selection, to encourage increased tree diversity among the regeneration.

Researchers and technicians are monitoring deer browse levels and other wildlife components, from pellet counts to the use of 250 motion-activated cameras. On some plots, loggers are leaving large tops where they fall, or piling tops and branches, to provide a barrier to deer browsing. Some sites will be scarified, where machinery roughs up the soil to provide a better seed bed and to discourage competing vegetation.

This monumental project began in 2016 and will last at least a decade, with measurements being retaken every two years. A large amount of baseline data was collected in order to better assess change.

Researchers hope to make management recommendations to move these forests in a sustainable direction.